

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 PM-07 L-03 NSC-07 CIAE-00

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P 051530Z APR 74

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1877

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

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AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, GR, TU

SUBJECT: REPORTED TURKISH VIOLATION OF GREEK AIR SPACE

REF: THESS 168

1. CONSERVATIVE "ELLINIKOS VORRAS" OF APRIL 5 CARRIES SERIES OF LEAD ITEMS ON GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS INCLUDING REPORT OF ALLEGED GOT ATTEMPT TO VIOLATE GREEK AIR SPACE, CURRENT TRAVEL IN WESTERN THRACE BY TURKISH AMBASSADOR GURUN, AND WIRE SERVICE REPORTS ON RECENT STATEMENT BY GOT DEFMIN ISIK (ATHENS REPORTING LATTER BY SEPTTEL).

2. ACCORDING TO "VORRAS" ACCOUNT, "SQUADRON OF GREEK COMBAT AIRCRAFT" INTERCEPTED ON MARCH 28 TURKISH MILITARY PLANES OVER AEGEAN, FORCING THEM TO "RETURN TO THEIR BASE". GREEK FORCES THUS "STERNLY DEFENDED NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY". INCIDENT OCCURRED IN CONNECTION WITH NATO AIR-SEA EXERCISE DURING WHICH TURKISH PLANES ENTERED AEGEAN AREA, CONTRAVENING NATO REGULATIONS THAT FINAL "LIVE" PHASE OF EXERCISE BE LIMITED TO NATIONAL TERRITORY OF PARTICIPATING FORCES. TURKISH CONTINGENT,
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ACCORDING TO REPORT, HAD REQUESTED PERMISSION FOR

OPERATIONS IN NORTH AEGEAN FROM NATO HEADQUARTERS IN NAPLES, WHICH REFUSED BECAUSE OF GREEK PROTEST. GOT FORCES SUBSEQUENTLY INSTRUCTED TO CARRY OUT FINAL PHASE OF EXERCISE IN "TURKISH WATERS" OF BLACK SEA. TURKS DID NOT, HOWEVER, "TAKE WARNING INTO CONSIDERATION" AND "GREECE AND US" CONSEQUENTLY "WITHDREW FORCES FROM MANEUVER".

3. WHEN TURKS INTRODUCED "FLOATING TARGET" IN AEGEAN AREA MARCH 28 FOR LIVE AMMO PRACTICE, GREEK "ATTACK PLANES" FORCED TURKISH PILOTS TO RETURN TO BASES. REPORT CONCLUDES THAT EXERCISE THEN TERMINATED THREE DAYS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.

4. "VORRAS" COMMENTS THAT ABOVE ACCOUNT BASED ON "USUALLY WELL INFORMED LOCAL SOURCES" AND, THEREFORE, MORE ACCURATE THAN "SUSPICIOUS" INFO CARRIED BY LONDON PRESS AND BBC.

5. SEPARATE FRONT-PAGE REPORT IN SAME ISSUE, DATELINED XANTHI, NOTES PRESENCE IN AREA OF GOT AMBASSADOR TO ATHENS GURUN RETURNING FROM ISTANBUL VIA WESTERN THRACE. AMBASSADOR VISITED XANTHI AND KOMOTINI APRIL 4 ENROUTE TO THESSALONIKI.

6. COMMENT: WE HAVE HAD NO MEANS LOCALLY THUS FAR TO CONFIRM OR REFUTE ACCOUNTS PARA 2 & 3, ABOVE.
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